



Title: "Eternal Real Estate"
Funeral : Carol Harshbarger

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." ... "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:1-4,6)

There will be death

It has often been said, "There are two things that are going to be. There will be taxes and there will be death." There are those who have figured out how to avoid paying taxes, however, no one has figured out how to escape death. As I stand here and as many of you sit here we are faced with the truth of God's Word that is undeniable, "...Inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment." (Hebrews 9:27 NAS)

Questions may be asked and I can assure you it does not offend the Lord for anyone to ask questions such as, "Why is there death? Why do Christians die physically?" We know that God is not offended by such questions, because He gives such clear answers in His written Word. I am not going to give you a full exposition on sickness and why all of mankind must face it for that would take several lengthy messages.

However, Paul gives a quick and to the point answer why all of us here will be pushed into the river of death if the Lord carries another 120 years or beyond, "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned." (Roman's 5:12) The Bible says, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) The Bible also holds this promise, "for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

Death, even the death of a born again Christian brings sorrow and it can bring weariness on our soul. There is a passage of Scripture that the Holy Spirit has been bringing to Roy's mind and heart that should be a comfort to all of us. It is a promise from the words spoken by Jesus Christ, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." (Matthew 5:4)

The whole Word of God should be a guide to truth for us all and especially the Words of Jesus in regards to His love and care for those who know Him as personal Savior and Lord.

Listen to His promise of heaven, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.” ... “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:1-4,6)

For those who have asked the Lord for forgiveness of sin and have invited Jesus Christ to come into their lives to be both Savior and Lord there are four truths to cling to. They are; 1.) Christians do not need to fear death. 2.) Jesus prepares a place for Christians. 3.) Jesus personally receives them. And 4.) Jesus is the only way to enter heaven.

Do not let your hearts be troubled

Jesus said clearly, “Do not let your hearts be troubled.” (John 14:1) The word “troubled” (*tarasso*) means not to trouble or stir up your heart that would cause you to nurse and rehearse to the point of causing yourself to become untrusting in God and in Christ.

Jesus is not saying that we can’t mourn or grieve. As a matter of fact Christians are to grieve and mourn with those who mourn. Jesus wept with Mary and other Jews at the graveside of Lazarus. (John 11:25) When Christians make the time to mourn with and comfort those who mourn they are offering ministry to both the grieving and to Christ. (Matthew 25:34-40)

Too often Christian’s look at death in the same way as the people in the world look at death. When this happens, hearts become troubled because they don’t meditate upon what God’s Word says about the death of a child of God. When Christians prayerfully read and study God’s Word, they come to understand completely what happened when Christ died on the Cross and on the third day rose from the dead.

Jesus won victory over the grave and death, therefore, the Christian’s cry of victory is “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? Thanks be to God! He gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”.... (1 Corinthians 15: 55, 56)

There is something else to consider. Christians can become troubled in heart when they look at death as an end instead of a beginning of being with Jesus forever. When Christians see death from a Biblical perspective, they come to fully understand that death for a true believer in Christ is not the house in which they are going to live, but only the porch to the place where they are going to spend eternity. Death is not the goal of a Christian who has suffered long with some dreaded illness, but only the passage to that place where they will be with Jesus Christ forever.

In times such as these, we are to walk in the light of Jesus' words, He says, "Trust in God; trust also in Me."

In My Father's house are many dwelling places

In times such as these, we are to walk in the light of Jesus' words, let our hearts be not troubled because Jesus prepares a place for true believers.

The New American Standard Bible has the best translation, "In My Father's house are many dwelling places." These "dwelling places" (*monē*) are places of eternal rest and peace and where the child of God will be in the presence of the Lord.

In this place that Christ has prepared there will be no more sorrow or crying, there will be no more hurts and disappointments and the frustrations of this life will be replaced with unspeakable joys. In this place there will be no more sin and the consequences of it.

There will be no handicap parking places, no pharmacies and prescriptions to fill as well as no hospitals, nursing homes or rehabilitation centers.

You can bank on it. Christ has made a place in heaven for those who love Him, and a home that is as literal and concrete as the house you live in today.

He personally receives Christians

Thirdly, He personally receives Christians. Jesus said; "...I will come back and take you to be with Me that you may be where I am." (John 14: 3)

In Acts 7:59 we read that Stephen expected the Lord to receive his spirit, for he prayed as they were stoning him "Lord receive my spirit." The repentant dying thief on the cross was to be with Christ in Paradise. In Luke 23: 42 and 43 we read of the repentant thief saying, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus' answer to him was, 'I tell you the truth, today you will be with Me in paradise.'

The promise made to His disciples is for all who have Jesus as personal Savior and Lord, He will take the Christian unto Himself.

Only way to heaven is through Jesus Christ

Lastly, the only way to heaven is through Jesus Christ.

In John 14:6, Jesus said; “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” The apostle Peter in his discourse about salvation to the Sanhedrin boldly proclaimed; “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other Name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” (Acts. 4:12)

This goes all the way back to the birth of Jesus and the instructions to Joseph. The angel told Joseph that Mary would give birth to a son and he was to give Him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21)

He is the Savior. That was His name from the very beginning. Peter makes it very clear and I must make it very clear also. There is no other name in which you can be saved.

Jesus said I am the truth. The truth is that the law cannot save you, religion or a ceremony cannot save you. The truth is that a preacher saying nice things or hymns sung at your funeral or the local paper announcing that you are a member of such and such church will not gain you entrance into heaven.

You must be under the Name of Jesus Christ, and this means He must be both Savior and Lord of your life, He must have and be the final authority of your heart and life. That alone is salvation. This is achieved by asking Him to forgive you of your sins and then inviting Him into your heart and life, thus, giving Him full reign over your life.

I shall meet you there some day

There are the powerful words of Christ, Jesus says, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die.” (John 11:25)

Brian Mavis shared a true story about a man who, like Carol, knew the suffering that comes with battling a very serious illness. This man wrote a letter to evangelist Charles E. Fuller who had announced that he would be speaking on heaven next Sunday. The man titled his letter, “My Eternal Real Estate.”

He writes, "Next Sunday you are to talk about Heaven. I am interested in that land because I have had a clear title to a bit of property there for over 55 years. I did not buy it. It was given to me without price. The donor purchased it for me at a very great price, [through His own shed blood.] I am not holding it for speculation, since the title is not transferable. No lock or bolts will ever be placed upon it's door, for no vicious person can ever enter that land where my dwelling stands.

There is a valley of deep shadow between the place where I live now, that to which I shall journey in a very short time. I cannot reach my home in the city of God without passing through the dark valley of [physical] death.

But I am not afraid, because the best friend that I have ever had went through the same valley alone [and conquered sin and death.] He has stuck by me through thick and thin since we first became acquainted 55 years ago, and I hold to His promise printed [in the Word of God, "Never will I leave nor forsake you."]

He will be with me as I walk through the valley of shadows, and I shall not lose my way when He is with me. I hope to hear your sermon on heaven next Sunday from my home, but I have no assurance that I shall be able to do so. Yes, I hope to be here while you talk, but if not, I shall meet you there some day."

Nearly every Sunday we hand out a paper called CrossRoads Notes. These notes have the meat of the message I spoke that morning. Carol was the key person that I depended upon for proofreading those notes until the last couple of months. I would send them to her late Saturday night and she would get up early, proofread them and zip them back to me.

On March 19, 2006 I was blessed with having one of Carol's granddaughter's in the service and after I had spoken a message, she picked up one of those CrossRoads Notes and took it to the hospital for her Grandma Harshbarger to read. As Carol faced the shadows of one of the most dread cancers that a person can face, she did not fear, she did what she was called to do. As she read those CrossRoads Notes, she made some minor corrections so that the CrossRoads Notes would be the best she could make them look before they went on our website.

She did what she loved to do and looked forward to, helping us get the Word of God out to a lost world. She did not fear the shadows of cancer, for she knew the one, Jesus, who walks with her. She proofread her last CrossRoads Notes not knowing how long she would be able to help with another one or that it was her last one. She is not with us to proofread this Sunday's CrossRoads Notes, She is in heaven awaiting to meet us there.

She is now enjoying her “Eternal Real Estate”, prepared for her by Jesus, and her message too is no doubt, “Grasp the truths to what Jesus says about heaven, and trust in Him as both Savior and Lord of your life.” You do not know when you will be pushed into the river of death. You can choose to walk alone or choose to do as Carol did. She had Christ with her. She wants to meet you there in heaven.

Let us pray!